



*Beltrami
County*



PUBLIC INFORMATION NOTICE

THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION SEEKS COMMENTS

The Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division (EFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (FS), the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT), and the Beltrami County Highway Department are developing alternatives for proposed roadway improvements along CSAH 22 (MN FH 52) in Beltrami County. Repairs are needed to improve the riding surface, adjust the roadway's substandard lane width, correct drainage and geometric deficiencies, improve driver safety, and provide for future transportation needs.

As part of the planning and analysis an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to evaluate several alternatives for accomplishing this work with the least impact to the social, natural, and cultural environment. The Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service will prepare the EA.

Background

The proposed study area is along approximately 10.8 km of CSAH 22 between CSAH 27 and CSAH 39 in Beltrami County, Minnesota. The route passes through a predominately rural area within the boundaries of the Blackduck State Forest and the Chippewa National Forest. The existing gravel roadway averages 6.1 m in width with substandard ditches and varying slopes. Located adjacent to the roadway is heavy vegetation and some wetland areas, and in one section the Twin Lakes. The current legal speed limit on the route is 55 mph; however, the actual speed is limited in some areas to approximately 30 mph due to the roadway geometry.

Actions Taken or Underway

- A Phase I Archaeological Survey and a Phase II Archaeological Site Evaluation have been completed for the project study area. By letter dated March 22, 2000, the State Historic Preservation Officer has concluded that no historic properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places will be affected.
- A wetland inventory has been performed within the project study area. There are wetlands (swamps, marshes, bogs, sloughs, ponds, etc.) within or adjacent to the existing roadway alignment. Specific impacts will be evaluated as part of the project development process.

Public Involvement

Public involvement activities provide an opportunity for the FHWA and its partners to present information to the general public while the various stages of the planning process are being undertaken. It also offers an opportunity for individuals, representatives of civic groups, public agencies, and governing bodies to offer comments, submit written material, and ask questions regarding the proposed project, as well as become informed of the schedule for future events in the process. Public involvement permits the exchange of ideas and information for the development of alternatives, identification of potential impacts, and selection of the preferred courses of action. Comments and suggestions will assist the planners in addressing the communities concerns. The intent of this process is to develop a design, which meets the project needs, yet minimizes adverse environmental and community impacts.

All interested citizens and interest groups are invited to provide written comments. Written comments should be mailed to Mr. Allen W. Burden, Division Engineer, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, 21400 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling VA 20166 by January 10, 2002. For more information, please call Ms. Brigitte Azran, Environmental Compliance Engineer at (703) 404-6283.

Alternatives

Based on an analysis of the existing conditions, several alternatives and means of implementing various alternatives for improving CSAH 22 (MN FH 52) will be developed. The public is encouraged to assist in the development of these alternatives through the public involvement process. These alternatives and other information will be made available for public review and comment in the future.

Alternatives and other information obtained during the analysis and public involvement process will be evaluated for potential social, economic and environmental impact. Measures to mitigate potential adverse impacts will be reviewed and considered during the review process. Public involvement and comment on the alternatives will assist in selection of a preferred course of action.

Considerations for Developing and Selecting Alternatives (Not in Order or Priority)

- Transportation Needs and Public Safety
- Impacts on the Environment
- Visitor Use and Experience
- Impacts to the Surrounding Communities
- Impacts on Cultural Resources

Tentative Project Development Schedule

Public Information Notice	December 10, 2001
Development of Alternatives	January 2002
End of Public Comment Period	January 10, 2002
Preparation of Environmental Assessment	Spring 2002
Public Review of Environmental Assessment	Summer 2002
Notice of Decision/Begin Final Design	Late Summer 2002
Advertise for Construction	Spring 2003



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Ms. Brigitte A. Azran
Environmental Compliance Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
(703) 404-6283
fax (703) 404-6217